

Protocols for Parish Volunteers Serving in Schools

The Role of the Parish and the School

Volunteers who go into a school from their parish should normally be recruited and checked via the DBS recruitment arrangements in the diocese. The school will need to confirm with the parish that these have been completed.

Even when there is a strong link between a Church school and a parish, where particular individuals hold roles in both, care should be taken to distinguish and fulfil the different legal responsibilities of schools and parishes and to share information where appropriate.

Where there is any confusion about whose responsibility it is to undertake a safeguarding action arising from a situation in the school, it is the school's responsibility to clarify this with the local authority and the diocese.

(Protecting All God's Children, The Policy for Safeguarding Children in the Church of England, 4th edition 2010)

Code of Conduct

In voluntary, extra-curricular groups, some pupils may wish to learn more about the Christian Faith through a regular meeting or club outside curriculum time. Pupils, teachers, parents or volunteers from the Parish may take a lead in organising this. If such groups are clear in their purpose and open in their agenda and their invitation to all to participate, then they have the function of enabling pupils to explore the Christian Faith in a very supportive environment.

Volunteers from the Parish helping or leading such groups are participating in the life of the faith community, on school premises. This special opportunity should be taken seriously, and should be arranged with appropriate liaison between the volunteers, other group leaders and the headteacher.

Visitors from the Parish taking part in the life of a school should:

- be willing to share their own experiences, beliefs and insights, but avoid (1) criticising the experience and insights of others and (2) imposing their views upon pupils in any way;
- be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies, and plan their involvement in the light of the aims and curriculum at the school;
- seek to use engaging teaching and learning methods that involve the pupils actively, and to communicate at appropriate levels for the age group(s) concerned;

- make clear to pupils who they are, who they represent, and what their aims are;
- be willing to respect and value the faith of the pupils and adults in the school when it is different from their own;
- develop ways of speaking to pupils that communicate their open approach, avoiding any hidden agenda to 'convert' or proselytise.

(Based on Guidance from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education)

Practical Advice:

- Never be on your own with a child
- Establish an appropriate dress code.
- Agree how you will address other members of staff in front of pupils and how pupils will address you.
- Sign in on entering the school and sign out when leaving.
- Wear an identity badge provided by the Parish or school.
- Wait to be invited into the staff room.
- Use the staff or visitor toilets; never use the children's toilets.
- Respect confidentiality.